

**The Report of the  
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Mount Jordan Middle School  
9360 South 300 East  
Sandy, Utah 84070**

**March 30-31, 2004**



Utah State Office of Education  
250 East 500 South  
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Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

**THE REPORT OF THE  
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**Mount Jordan Middle School  
9360 South 300 East  
Sandy, Utah 84070**

**March 30-31, 2004**

**UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION**

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State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

**DIVISION OF  
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## **FOREWORD**

A major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate inservice growth and school improvement. Consequently, requirements include not only meeting the standards of the Utah State Office of Education, but also completing a school evaluation every six years.

School evaluation is that effort by the local school staff to take a comprehensive look at the school's program, operation, and effect. The school determines how closely its purposes and philosophy coincide with its actual practices and the degree to which its stated objectives are being reached. It is a three-phased program: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, March 30-31, 2004, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to meet the requirements referred to above.

The entire staff of Mount Jordan Middle School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Eduardo Alba is commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for the generally fine program being provided for Mount Jordan Middle School students, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more adequately meet the needs of the students of Mount Jordan Middle School.

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*10/30/03*

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# **MOUNT JORDAN MIDDLE SCHOOL**

## **ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF**

### **School Administration**

Eduardo Alba ..... Principal  
Lynn Allred ..... Assistant Principal  
Tracy Sjostrom ..... Assistant Principal

### **Counseling**

Carla AliBudi ..... Counselor  
Phil Leatherwood ..... Counselor

### **Support Staff**

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Lurice Whitehead ..... Attendance Secretary

### **Faculty**

Heidi Abraham	Robert Marx	Willemina Phelts
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Michael Anderson	Brad Meyers	Julia Skoubye
Susan Blackburn	Kimberly Mitchell	Erika Smith
Dennis Budge	Robert Morris	Pamela Spitzer
Sherrie Cornia	Jana Mumford	Erin Wilkey
Barbara Douglas	Mark Murphy	Ray Willis
Michael Goodman	Steven Murphy	Peggy Wong
Sylvia Hansen	Lela Newey	Ronald Wood
Irene Hardman	Elizabeth Ostler	Frances Woodford
Wendy Hawkins	Paul Otterstrom	

## **MOUNT JORDAN MIDDLE SCHOOL**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Our mission is to work in concert with our community to help all students become responsible, caring citizens, life-long learners, and healthy individuals.

### **SCHOOL MOTTO**

The view is better when Mountaineers reach the top together.

### **BELIEF STATEMENTS**

1. We believe that all children, with instruction and timely interventions, are capable of learning new information and skills and should have equal opportunity to do so.
2. We believe students develop self-worth through accomplishing meaningful and manageable tasks.
3. We believe that for students to be successful in their class work and become life-long learners they must become proficient in reading, writing, and math.
4. We believe that every student should have an adult advocate.
5. We believe that teachers should be well-trained professionals who adapt instruction to meet the needs and learning styles of individual students.
6. We believe that discipline problems are reduced when learning activities and classroom management strategies are well planned and organized.
7. We believe that teachers must be life-long learners and model the skills of life-long learning with their students.
8. We believe that teachers must work in unison across the curriculum to help students acquire a functioning knowledge base that relates to the “real world”.
9. We believe that each classroom must have adequate and appropriate technology for instruction of students.
10. We believe that Mount Jordan Middle School must create a safe environment free from danger, fear, and harassment for students, teachers, and staff.



## **MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM**

Christine Huley, Ed.D., Professional Learning Department, Granite School District,  
Visiting Team Chairperson

Dolph Church, Hillcrest Junior High School, Murray School District

Renee Genereux, Judge Memorial High School, Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City

Curt VandenBosch, Rocky Mountain Junior High School, Weber School District

# **VISITING TEAM REPORT**

## **MOUNT JORDAN MIDDLE SCHOOL**

### **CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE**

Mount Jordan Middle School has been in existence since 1954. It was originally a junior high school and was later transformed into a middle school that serves seventh, eighth, and ninth grades. The school serves the communities of Sandy, Midvale, Draper, and South Jordan. There are 758 students enrolled from these areas. There are 41 teachers at Mount Jordan Middle School, with an average of 17.3 years of experience. A majority of the teachers have been trained in the REACH program, since the minority student population has increased over the past few years. The school consists of a minority population of 111 students – the majority of whom are Hispanic students. Asians, Pacific Islanders, and American Indian students make up the remaining minority percentages. Mount Jordan Middle School is supported by an active School Community Council and PTSA. These committees provide input and direction for the school; however, the School Community Council provides approval for the School Trust Land budget and the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan. Input from the parents and community is encouraged and viewed as important by the school administration and teaching staff. In November 2000 the school community developed a strategic plan that was adjusted in August 2003, in conjunction with the belief statements and desired results for student learning.

*a) What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?*

CRT data was the primary source of the student learning information used in the Mount Jordan Middle School self-study. It was the understanding of the school administration that only CRT data should be incorporated in the self-study. From this information it was determined that there is an achievement gap between the Caucasian and minority students. In Language Arts, 70 percent of all Caucasian students are performing at grade level. Minority students scored approximately 50 percent below grade level. On the Math CRT, 60 percent of the Caucasian students were performing at grade level. The minority students' performance outcomes in math were below average, with the exception of the Asian students. The Asian population scored in the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile. Student achievement scores varied depending on the number of students in the particular minority sub-group. For the most part, minority students are not performing at sufficient levels on the Math portion of the CRT. Science CRT averaged scores for seventh, eighth, and ninth grade indicated that approximately 60 percent of students are performing at grade level. Again, the breakdown of the minority subgroups indicates that, in particular, the LEP, special education, and Hispanic students are performing below sufficient levels in Science.

- b) *What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

In the future the school profile should include a wider variety of student learning data such as SATs, GPAs, attendance data, free and reduced-price lunch rates, mobility, discipline referrals, and other data that provide a comprehensive picture of the students at Mount Jordan Middle School. In addition, program information such as after-school tutoring, attendance tracking, the Math Lab, student mentors, and ESL support should be included in the self-study to provide a comprehensive picture of the school.

**Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:**

- The school should continue to develop and use disaggregated data to determine the learning needs of all students, particularly the minority student population.
- The school should continue to implement student-centered programs based on the needs of the students in areas of academic support and attendance.
- Administrators and teachers should look carefully at additional sources of data (attendance, at-risk, discipline referrals, ESL programs) to gain a comprehensive picture of the students and their learning needs at Mount Jordan Middle School.

**CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS**

- a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

The teachers and the administration have been involved in the self-study process. Although parents have been invited to participate in the various aspects of the accreditation process, time constraints have prevented high levels of involvement. The Community Council and PTSA are new to the process, and gain a clearer idea as to the purpose of the new accreditation process upon meeting with the Visiting Team. The administration and staff have been involved in the development of the self-analysis at Mount Jordan Middle School. They have given input to the revision of the mission statement and together formulated belief statements and desired results for student learning which address and align with the current needs of the students. Every staff member served on a focus group and was involved in the departmental analysis. In addition, communication between the leadership team and the faculty reached consensus on the action plan. Students were not fully involved in the process; however, they know the desired results for student learning, and can articulate their importance and how they are being incorporated into the classroom as well as throughout the school.

- b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

The self-study was limited as a result of the exclusion of additional and pertinent data sources. The conclusion derived from CRT data was appropriate. Attention is needed to address the growing achievement gap between the minority and Caucasian students. However, other patterns of student learning could not be identified. The self-study did not reflect all of the positive programs and support currently implemented at the school. In conclusion, the report does not represent all of the purposeful work that is occurring at the school.

### **CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

Mount Jordan Middle School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

1. Mountaineers are responsible, caring citizens who respect self and others, attend school regularly, behave appropriately, and actively participate in school activities and service opportunities.
2. Mountaineers are life-long learners who set goals, learn study skills, and continually push the limits of their knowledge.
3. Mountaineers are healthy individuals who engage in activities that promote physical, mental and emotional health, and who avoid substance abuse.

#### **Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:**

- a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

There is evidence that the administration, staff, parents, and students have worked collaboratively to create, develop, and fine-tune the shared vision of the school. All stakeholders had input into the process. The focus group responsible for the shared vision consisted primarily of the faculty. This group played a substantial role in facilitating the development and adoption of the mission statement and the belief statements. Other stakeholders, parents, community members, and students played a minimal role in the adoption of the shared vision components. The Visiting Team would recommend giving all stakeholders, particularly parents and

students, a relevant role in determining the shared vision and direction for the school.

The school also has a motto: “The view is better when Mountaineers reach the top together.” This motto has been in place for six years and was developed through a collaborative process of suggestions and nominations for ideas, discussion, and adopted after a majority vote of the staff.

- b) *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

The Mount Jordan Middle School Belief Statements clearly reflect the intent of the administration and staff to provide every student with a quality educational experience. It is apparent that many of the qualities enumerated in the belief statements are evident in the practice and culture of the school. The Visiting Team would recommend a continued commitment to striving to attain the ideals included in the belief statements.

- c) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

The school’s mission and belief statements directly align with the desired results of student learning. The desired results for student learning evolved from the needs of students and what they need to know and be able to do as they leave Mount Jordan Middle School.

### **Curriculum Development:**

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

Support is provided for the effective use of research-based instructional practices in implementing the curriculum. Collaboration about curriculum issues is evident. The school has adopted Michael J. Schmoker’s model known as RESULTS. Each department sets short-term and long-term goals to improve student learning and to meet the requirements of the Utah Core Curriculum. Each department has identified essential knowledge and skills that students must have in the different content areas. The teachers then develop an action plan aimed at improving student performance. The plan is carried out and then evaluated. The process is repeated each quarter. The teachers have received training and have multiple resources for effectively using research-based instructional practices. Greater collaboration within departments has occurred because of these practices. The Visiting Team would recommend the continued practice of the RESULTS cycles.

- b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

There is widespread evidence of knowledge of the desired results for student learning among teachers and students. The DRSLs are posted, discussed, and even used as test questions in many classes. However, there is varying evidence that the teachers are actually designing lessons around the DRSLs and incorporating these into classroom instruction. Many of the departments acknowledge this by stating that their only acknowledgement of the “healthy individuals” DRSL is their support of Red Ribbon Week. The Visiting Team would recommend that a collaborative process be established to help teachers develop ways to implement the DRSLs into classroom instructional practices, as well as throughout the school.

#### **Quality Instructional Design:**

- a) *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

The staff gathered data by means of a survey to get a better understanding of the different types of learning experiences and instructional strategies being used throughout the school. Results of the survey indicate that teachers are employing a variety of instructional strategies in the classroom. The Visiting Team observed teachers employing such methods as in direct instruction, having students work cooperatively in small groups, using educational games for student instruction, engaging the students in discussion, using visual aids, asking open-ended questions, and using hands-on activities, to name a few. Additionally, students have the opportunity to participate in the school science fair and cultural fair. The Counseling Department also is providing the ninth grade students the chance to participate in Reality Town.

The Visiting Team would like to encourage the staff to continue to explore “best practices” that will keep students actively engaged in the learning process.

- b) *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

The Visiting Team observed teachers using several instructional strategies during a class period. The staff works to ensure that students with special needs are provided with support and accommodations to meet the goals of their individual educational plans (IEPs). The school has a peer tutor program in place to provide additional support to special-needs students. Several teachers are ESL-endorsed,

and the school has recently purchased additional resource materials for the ESL students. Additionally, an ESL language acquisition class is offered to students with limited skills in English.

It is evident, based on student and parent feedback, that the staff is dedicated to meeting the needs of all learners.

- c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

This year an after-school homework lab has been implemented to provide all students with access to additional support for their schoolwork. A math lab also is available to all students after school. In addition, most teachers make themselves available to students before and after school for individual help. Mentors are assigned to low-performing students in an effort to help them complete assigned work and raise grades. The counseling center recognizes student academic achievement with the Most Improved Club and the Honor Roll Club. The Peer Leadership Team provides students with opportunities to help one another academically and socially. Parents are able to access student progress and grades through the Internet with Power School.

In conversation with the Visiting Team, the staff expressed a desire to have access to disaggregated student data to be better able to identify at an early stage those students most in need of additional support. The Visiting Team recommends that a system be implemented that would allow teachers easy access to disaggregated student data in order to make informed decisions to better support student learning.

### **Quality Assessment Systems:**

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or schoolwide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

Schoolwide expectations have been identified in the form of DRSLs. Departmental reports have addressed the teaching of the DRSLs within their respective curricula. The Visiting Team would like to encourage the staff to develop/identify appropriate assessment instruments that could be used to provide schoolwide feedback with regard to successful implementation of the DRSLs.

- b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

It is evident that the staff recognizes the importance of developing student assessments that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards. Evidence of this is found with the implementation of the “results cycle” program

to better assess student learning and classroom instruction. Data from the cycles are analyzed at the departmental level, and instruction is adjusted as needed to improve student achievement.

The Visiting Team commends the efforts of the staff in collaborating with one another to fully implement the “results cycle” program.

- c) *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

It is evident, based on classroom observations, conversations with the administration, and student and parent feedback, that the staff is concerned for and cares deeply about the social and academic well-being of the students. The Visiting Team is confident that assessments are designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner. The Visiting Team would encourage the staff to continue to gather data from the RESULTS Cycles with the intent of analyzing student learning and instructional effectiveness. The Visiting Team believes that continued analysis of student performance and instructional effectiveness will ensure that classroom assessments are fair and equitable for all students.

#### **Leadership for School Improvement:**

- a) *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

The school leadership has embraced and implemented the RESULTS Cycle. Every department focuses on a SMART goal within its content and focuses on student learning and growth with the selected goal. Teachers meet quarterly to share the results of their efforts on student achievement. A safe environment has been established where teachers can share what has and has not had an effective impact on student learning. As a result, teachers have become more reflective in their teaching practice. Other outcomes include the development of integrated projects between content areas and an increase of collaboration and collegiality. Students are supported, valued, and recognized with programs such as the National Junior Honor Society, Mountaineer of the Month, Seven-Up Club, Most Improved Club, Student of the Week, and the Ninth Grade Awards Assembly. Teachers are recognized with a Teacher of the Week program, faculty gatherings, and CSIP celebrations.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

The school leadership has indicated that a schoolwide focus on specific learning goals needs to be developed. The school leadership team has begun to identify and prioritize the learning goals as identified in the action plan. Although not all



of it was included in the school profile, the administration does have access to a variety of student data that is informing the direction of the school. The school has implemented the research-based RESULTS model and is observing a stronger focus on the use of data to inform instructional practice. An increase in collaboration has occurred as a result of the implementation of this model.

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

The school leadership uses a variety of strategies to monitor student progress. Standardized testing instruments such as the SAT and CRT are used. Teacher-made assessments are also consistently used. Teachers examine grades on a regular basis, communicate with parents via mid-term progress reports, examine Power School reports, and provide trackers to students who are in danger of failing. The Jordan Performance Appraisal System (JPAS) provides teachers with ongoing feedback and evaluation of their implementation of best instructional practices. The RESULTS program has provided a structure for teachers to become more reflective about their teaching and the degree to which students are learning.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

The school leadership demonstrates a high level of communication that reinforces the learning environment of the school. Professional development, technology, community building, morale, and collaboration align with the mission and beliefs of the school. An administrator serves on the Safety Committee for the Jordan School District, and at the school level procedures for efficient communication and evacuation in the event of an emergency have been implemented.

- e) *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

The school leadership, in conjunction with the School Community Council and PTSA, uses the learning needs of the students to drive decisions made with regard to programs and use of resources. For example, attendance emerged as a barrier to increased levels of student learning, and as a result a tracking program was implemented. Other programs that respond to the learning needs of the students include a math and homework lab after school. In response to the perceptual data, the students and teachers are planning a “Fun Friday” which will offer enrichment opportunities for the students. The anticipated outcomes include an increase in student and teacher morale through relationship building and fun. These programs, as well as the Fitness Center, align with the desired results for student

learning. Clear and measurable indicators of mastery of the DRSLs need to be discussed and implemented in the future.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

The school leadership encourages and embraces the involvement of the teachers, parents, and students. This is evidenced by the involvement of the School Community Council and the PTSA. In addition, many volunteers from the community help with after-school tutoring. The parent groups are aware of the school improvement plan, and feel their opinions and questions are respected by the school leadership. Teachers and parents have expressed the feeling that their concerns and ideas are listened to and acted upon. Students have expressed that through the structure of the student council they are able to voice their opinions, and the administration acts upon their requests. The implementation of the RESULTS program has introduced and reinforced commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning.

### **Community Building:**

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

Mount Jordan Middle School promotes community spirit and learning among the faculty through staff development and interdisciplinary efforts. Among these are vertical team meetings in which the English department participates, and the RESULTS Cycle program that allows teachers to learn from each other about methods of assessment and improvement of student learning. Interdisciplinary efforts are evident in both the RESULTS Cycles and the projects developed between and across many departments.

The principal is actively involved in structuring these opportunities and in affirming the faculty's efforts. His "words of wisdom" each day set the tone for the school community living out the DRSLs of being responsible, caring citizens and lifelong learners.

The Visiting Team observed that, in their classroom instruction, teachers were sensitive and attentive to student learning and emotional needs. Many teachers employed the direct instruction method in the classes observed, though some teachers included cooperative and project-oriented learning in their classrooms. Incorporating more of these latter strategies will meet the needs of students this age for hands-on learning and cooperative projects. This will help the school meet its all-school improvement goal of creating "an environment that promotes a sense of belonging, improved school spirit and improved student behavior."

A number of students are involved in peer tutoring and in assisting Mount Jordan's special needs students in activities. The student representatives pride themselves on initiating the idea for Fun Friday activities and for class projects such as the "boat project" in science. They concurred that the strength of Mount Jordan is its good teachers. Their greatest concern is students who seem not to care. Finding ways to involve more students in various activities may be a possible challenge to future student council representatives, administrators, and teachers.

In discussions with individuals and groups, the Visiting Team learned that both students and parents welcome the newly implemented "Fun Friday" enrichment period as an opportunity for the students to participate in extracurricular activities. These activities, as well as the music festivals and culture fairs, are seen as important for students to bond and to build school spirit.

- b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

Mount Jordan Middle School teachers in the English Department are involved in vertical team meetings with junior and high school teachers. Music Department concerts and festivals are extended to the community and to elementary programs. Community programs such as community school, Sandy City plays, Mountain West Ballet, and university classes and programs utilize the school building. In addition, some students are involved in community service projects such as Sub for Santa. The focus group recommended that the school explore the possibility of bringing in speakers from the community to enrich classes.

Representative Mount Jordan parents are involved in PTSA, Community Council, and the donation of calculators, as well as volunteering for the ESL program, Reality Town, the technology committee, and attendance office tracking. The Visiting Team met with a group of parents who acknowledge the openness of the administration in listening and responding to parental ideas and concerns. Some parents have attended the RESULTS Cycle celebrations and commented on the value of this faculty effort. These parents concurred with the school improvement goal of assisting parents, especially those who speak languages other than English, in accessing school resources and voicing their concerns. A possible resource recommended by the Visiting Team is the concept of a Parent Center.

### **Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:**

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

The members of the Visiting Team attended the RESULTS Cycle celebration on the first day of the visit and were impressed with the enthusiasm of the presenters and the faculty for this effort, which addresses goals one through five of the school improvement plan. The continuation of this program is key to analyzing and addressing both student learning needs and teaching strategies to improve student learning. The Visiting Team suggests presentations on best practices in instructional strategies as a way of enhancing this professional development effort. The focus group recommended sharing knowledge through e-mail and a resource book to help teachers in building their skills. The Visiting Team observed some interdisciplinary projects among departments, and heard from faculty and parents that this work helps integrate knowledge for students. In addition, faculty members have participated individually in professional development in their respective disciplines and as a body in CPR/first aid training and REACH. Implementation of the ideas learned through this diversity training in classroom and schoolwide activities will help non-Caucasian students thrive at Mount Jordan.

- b) *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

During the accreditation self-study process, all faculty members have contributed time and ideas to develop the school improvement plan. They have been members of focus groups and involved in the departmental analysis. It was clear to the Visiting Team that the administration had offered ample opportunity for faculty input for the school improvement action plan during these meetings and the RESULTS Cycle process.

Faculty members expressed a need for more weekly time for professional development in order to share ideas and strategies, as well as develop best practices.

#### **CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI**

This section is not applicable to Mount Jordan Middle School. Most of public junior highs and middle schools in Utah are not accredited through NAAS, but only by the USOE – it is their choice to join NAAS or not.

## CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

- a) *To what extent is the schoolwide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

The action plan provides sufficient follow-through opportunities to increase the learning levels of students. With the RESULTS Cycle currently in place, the school faculty and administration meet regularly to discuss student progress, and reflect on how particular strategies are negatively impacting student progress. The after-school homework labs provide support for students who need additional learning support. Emphasis is being placed on the use of data to drive instruction. Time and training will focus on looking at student achievement and determining and implementing best practices to address the students' learning needs. In the area of middle school reform, a clear plan has been designed to study, read, and implement middle-level structures, engaged and relevant instructional strategies, and interdisciplinary practices. A plan is also in place to address the cultural needs of students and parents. The action plan also incorporates the ongoing support for a school and class environment that promotes a sense of belonging and improved school spirit and behavior.

- b) *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, schoolwide and systemwide?*

The faculty, administration, and parents are very supportive of the action plan and the steps needed to fulfill it. The teachers have been involved in the self-study process and readily acknowledge the needs in response to which the action plan was developed. The parents also support the direction of the action plan. Teachers have expressed the need for adequate time to discuss student learning needs and to develop and implement best instructional practices as outlined in the action plan. The administration realizes the importance of adequate time and is committed to working toward a weekly release time for teachers.

- c) *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the schoolwide action plan appear to be?*

The follow-up process is solid and includes a variety of effective strategies to ensure that the plan is implemented and accountability built in. Examples include clear time lines; the process of recording and assessing student grades; evaluation from students, parents, and staff; minutes from meetings; observations of best practice implementation in classrooms; and studying student achievement and adjusting when necessary. The action plan provides a strong roadmap for Mount Jordan Middle School.

## **CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM**

### **Commendations:**

- The Visiting Team commends the use of the RESULTS Cycle as a highly effective process that promotes the use of data to identify areas of student learning needs, as well as reflection and collaboration among teachers, staff, and administration.
- The Visiting Team commends the school leadership, administration, and teacher leadership that promote a caring and respectful learning environment for the students of Mount Jordan Middle School.
- The Visiting Team commends Mount Jordan Middle School for its support of a diverse culture. The school's responsiveness is evident and strong among all stakeholders in the school community.

### **Recommendations:**

- The Visiting Team recommends the implementation of a data management system that provides the staff with easy access to disaggregated student data, allowing informed decisions about student learning to continue.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Mount Jordan Middle School continue to explore "best practices" for middle-level students, such as relevant, engaged student learning, differentiation, and small interdisciplinary teams.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue its dialogue with the Jordan School District leadership to develop a schedule that provides increased collaboration time for professional development, addressing student learning needs, the development of interdisciplinary projects, team/department collaboration, and vertical and horizontal curriculum mapping.